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Cooperation between the United Nations and regional and other organizations: cooperation between the United Nations and the League of Arab States

Cooperation between the United Nations and the League of Arab States

Report of the Secretary-General*

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* In accordance with paragraph 1, section C, of General Assembly resolution 54/248, the present report is being submitted on 17 October in order to include all contributions from the United Nations system.

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I. Introduction

1. The present report is submitted pursuant to paragraph 12 of General Assembly resolution 55/10 of 30 October 2000.

II. Consultations and exchanges of information

2. During the period under review, the secretariats of the United Nations and the League of Arab States, as well as the Office of the Permanent Observer for the League of Arab States to the United Nations, continued to maintain close contact on matters of mutual concern to the two organizations.

3. The Secretary-General attended the Summit Meeting of the League of Arab States held in Amman on 27 and 28 March 2001 and delivered a statement in which he, inter alia, paid tribute to the then outgoing Secretary General of the League of Arab States. The latter received the United Nations high-level Coordinator, who had been appointed, pursuant to paragraph 14 of Security Council resolution 1284 (1999), on 12 September 2000 at the Mission of the League in New York. The Coordinator also met with the newly appointed Secretary General of the League, on 26 June 2001 at its headquarters in Cairo. The United Nations Special Coordinator for the Middle East peace process remained in close contact with the League and conferred with the Secretary General during his visit to Cairo in September 2001. High-level contacts between the United Nations Relief and Works Agency for Palestine Refugees in the Near East (UNRWA) and the League included the participation of the Commissioner-General of UNRWA in the meeting of the Council of Arab Foreign Affairs in March 2001.

III. Follow-up action on proposals agreed to at general meetings between organizations of the United Nations system and the League of Arab States

4. A summary of the reports of the organizations and agencies of the United Nations system on their cooperation with the League of Arab States during the period under review follows. It represents the follow-up action on proposals adopted at the meeting between the United Nations and the League of Arab States in Vienna in 1999 (see A/54/180, chap. IV).

A. United Nations Secretariat

1. Department of Public Information

5. United Nations Radio continued to cover various aspects of the work and activities of the League of Arab States and related issues in its daily news live broadcasts and current affairs magazines in various languages. Some of the stories included: the Arab Summit calling for a protection force for the occupied Palestinian territory; the Arab Women's Summit in Cairo; the Arab Gulf Programme for United Nations Development Organizations to finance the first Pan-Arab Open University; and full coverage of the Arab Summit in Amman.

6. The United Nations information centres continued their cooperation with the League of Arab States through exchanges of information and servicing of requests for information on the United Nations system, including the following: the United Nations information centre in Cairo and the League organized a press conference on the signing of a memorandum of understanding between the International Organization for Migration (IOM) and the League; the Officer-in-Charge of the United Nations information centre in Tunis and the Under-Secretary-General of the League delivered speeches on the Millennium Report (A/54/2000) during a day of study. The United Nations information centre in Tunis and the Arab League Centre also organized a United Nations seminar on prospects for Palestinian economic development and the Middle East peace process. Other United Nations information centre activities related to the International Day of Solidarity with the Palestinian People (29 November 2000) included interviews, issuance of press releases, speaking engagements, production of a 30-minute television programme and placement in the media of the Secretary-General's message, which was also read at various events commemorating the day.

2. United Nations Development Fund for Women

7. The United Nations Development Fund for Women contributed to the Arab Conference on Gender and Poverty, organized by the League of Arab States, the Government of Morocco, and the Centre of Arab

Women for Training and Research. The objective of the conference was to identify the root causes of Arab women's poverty and exchange experiences in methods and approaches adopted to combat poverty among women. In that context, poverty alleviation policies and strategies were assessed and discussions were launched on the mechanisms for the integration of those concepts into government policies and strategies.

B. United Nations Centre for Human Settlements (Habitat)

8. The United Nations Centre for Human Settlements (Habitat) coordinates activities related to human settlements in the Arab States region with the League of Arab States. The Regional Office for Africa and the Arab States invites the League to participate in all its regional conferences and, where applicable and appropriate, co-organizes joint activities. UNCHS also participates, whenever possible, in the annual meetings of the ministers of housing held at the headquarters of the League.

C. United Nations Children's Fund

9. In preparation for the special session of the General Assembly on Children, a preparatory committee, which included the League of Arab States, the Economic and Social Commission for Western Asia (ESCWA), the host country (Egypt) and the United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF), was invited for the Regional Symposium on Children (Beirut, 4-27 April 2001). The expert papers presented at the Symposium will form the basis for a report on the state of the Arab child. To enrich the consultative process, UNICEF has supported regional meetings of youth and civil society. A regional media forum is being planned. UNICEF support is provided for League participation in these and related activities.

10. UNICEF supports the League's Pan-Arab Project for Family Health (PAPFAM), which collects data on the health of families in the League's member States. In addition, UNICEF is a member of the preparatory committee working on a special session of the Council of Arab Ministers of Health on child health, scheduled for November 2001.

D. United Nations Conference on Trade and Development

11. The League of Arab States was closely associated with the United Nations Conference on Trade and Development (UNCTAD) in the organization of a meeting of high-level experts from Arab countries to prepare for the Ministerial Conference of the World Trade Organization (WTO), which will be held in Qatar in November 2001. The meeting was held on 20 and 21 June 2001 in Chavanne-de-Bogis, Switzerland. It was decided at the meeting that a high-level technical group of experts from Arab countries would participate in a meeting in September 2001 to be hosted by the authorities of Qatar in connection with the preparation of the fourth WTO Ministerial Conference. The League and UNCTAD have been requested to jointly prepare and organize that meeting.

E. United Nations International Drug Control Programme: Office for Drug Control and Crime Prevention

12. By its resolution 55/25 of 15 November 2000, the General Assembly adopted the United Nations Convention against Transnational Organized Crime and its two Protocols dealing with trafficking in persons and smuggling of migrants. On 2 March 2001, the Ad Hoc Committee on the Elaboration of a Convention against Transnational Organized Crime approved the draft text of the third Protocol dealing with trafficking in firearms and will soon submit it to the General Assembly for adoption. Resolution 55/25 also urges all States to sign and ratify the Convention and the protocols as soon as possible in order to ensure their speedy entry into force. Each instrument requires 40 ratifications to enter into force. In order to promote ratification of these instruments, the UNDCP is currently organizing pre-ratification seminars in various regions of the world as well as starting technical cooperation in this regard.

F. United Nations Development Programme

13. The implementation of project RAB/99/001, aimed at strengthening cooperation through the establishment of a human development forum within the League of Arab States, progressed satisfactorily.

The concept of the forum was developed and endorsed by a meeting of Arab experts convened at the headquarters of the League, in Cairo, in June 2000. The Forum held its second meeting, on globalization, learning and human development in the Arab region, in February 2001 in Cairo. A conference on poverty and Arab women was organized under the auspices of the project in Morocco in March 2001.

14. Cooperation between the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) Regional Bureau for Arab States and the General Secretariat of the League of Arab States was further strengthened through continued contacts between officials of the two parties and through increased synergies between their activities. The two parties agreed to convene a regional conference on governance. The involvement of the League is expected to provide the needed political support to advance the objective of the UNDP regional programme on governance with emphasis on strengthening parliaments, supporting frameworks for financial transparency and accountability, improving the administration of justice and promoting human rights. Increased collaboration has developed between the UNDP-supported regional Centre of Arab Women for Training and Research and the League's unit for women's and family affairs.

15. UNDP continued its cooperation with the specialized organizations of the League of Arab States. For example, it cooperated with the Arab Organization for Agricultural Development in organizing the Arab Ministerial Conference on Water and Agriculture. UNDP has also agreed to jointly finance a South-South cooperation initiative with the Arab Industrial Development and Mining Organization for the development of national quality infrastructure in some Arab countries.

G. United Nations Environment Programme

16. The United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP) has continued its support for the Council of Arab Ministers Responsible for the Environment over the years, with emphasis on priority programmes identified at the annual ministerial meetings. The restructuring of the Joint Committee for Environment and Development in the Arab Region, by which the Minister residing over the Council session would also chair the Committee, and the participation of senior officials from member States of the League of Arab States in addition to the regional/international organizations, will enhance efforts towards coordinating regional environmental protection programmes and activities in a cost-effective and integrated manner.

H. Economic and Social Commission for Western Asia

17. Cooperation between the Economic and Social Commission for Western Asia (ESCWA) and the League of Arab States continued with the holding of regular meetings, substantive contributions by ESCWA to meetings of the League and vice versa, and the implementation of joint projects. ESCWA also cooperated and coordinated with subsidiary bodies and specialized agencies of the League.

18. ESCWA continued to follow up with the League on the implementation of the Integrated Regional Follow-up by the Arab States to Global Conferences. In that regard, the following activities were held: a round-table discussion on capacity-building of non-governmental organizations as a tool to enhance poverty alleviation mechanisms (Cairo, September 2000); and a high-level Arab meeting for the follow-up to the implementation of the Habitat Agenda[1] (Bahrain, November 2000). The League designated ESCWA and UNEP as principal actors for the regional preparations for the World Summit on Sustainable Development and the follow-up at the regional level on the implementation of Agenda 21.

19. The main activities in the field of social development included the following: (a) the participation of ESCWA in the meetings of the High-level Steering Committee and of the Technical Coordination Committee of the Pan-Arab Project for Family Health (PAPFAM) of the League of Arab States; (b) co-sponsoring of and substantive contributions to an inter-agency meeting on youth and employment in the Arab States (Beirut, May 2000); (c) ESCWA contribution to the twenty-fifth session of the League's Commission for Arab Women (Cairo, April 2000) through the organization of a workshop on the sharpening of the negotiation skills of Arab delegations taking part in the special session of the General Assembly entitled "Women 2000: gender equality, development and peace for the twenty-first century; and (d) ESCWA participation in and

substantive contribution to the First Summit for Arab Women (Cairo, November 2000) and the Arab Conference on Women and Poverty (Casablanca, March 2001).

20. In the area of statistics, ESCWA and the Council of Economic Unity of the League of Arab States prepared a Glossary of National Accounts in Arabic, English and French. In the area of agriculture, ESCWA in cooperation with the Arab Organization for Agricultural Development convened an expert group meeting on the harmonization of norms, regulations and legal instruments for selected agricultural inputs with a view to regional cooperation (Cairo, February 2001).

21. In the field of industry, ESCWA participated in the First Arab Productivity Conference, organized by the Arab Industrial Development and Mining Organization (Cairo, April 2001). The Arab Federation for Food Industries contributed to the ESCWA expert group meeting on the harmonization of industrial norms, regulations and legal instruments for regional cooperation: enhancing regional accreditation schemes (Beirut, May 2001).

I. United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization

22. The Cairo office of the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO) continues its cooperation with certain specialized organizations of the League of Arab States. During the period under review, the office was represented at meetings of the League's Joint Executive Committee for Environment and Development and subcommittee meetings on desertification and the environment. The League is also regularly invited to attend all UNESCO Cairo office regional activities, especially those on ecology, hydrology and geology, for consultation and exchange of experiences.

23. Within the framework of the ongoing cooperation between UNESCO and the Arab League Educational, Cultural and Scientific Organization, several meetings and workshops have been jointly organized in the Arab region around themes such as groundwater protection, the biosphere reserves and sustainable development, hydrology, hydraulic engineering and river basins, remote sensing and geographic information system placations and observation, and desertification.

24. UNESCO also cooperates with the Federation of Arab News Agencies with which it reached an agreement to strengthen cooperation in training activities for journalists. The Federation will be invited to send representatives to a UNESCO workshop on the Internet and the work of news agencies to be organized late in 2001. The Arab State Broadcasting Union, a specialized agency of the League of Arab States, has been cooperating with UNESCO in the "screens without frontiers" project by contributing a number of programmes.

J. Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations

25. During 2000 and 2001, meetings were conducted between the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO) and the Woman and Family Department of the League of Arab States. Gender mainstreaming documents and programmes were shared. The Socio-Economic and Gender Analysis Programme (SEAGA) was presented as a tool for training of trainers. Discussions with the League are ongoing in order to organize joint activities in the field of methodologies for gender mainstreaming strategies in the Near East countries.

26. FAO held discussions with the Arab Organization for Agricultural Development in March 2001 to explore possibilities of collaborating in improving the information system on the incidence, nature and causes of chronic food insecurity and vulnerability in the Arab States. This collaboration was deemed important given that household food security information is critical for national policy makers in their efforts to formulate and implement policies and programmes to reduce the number of undernourished people and achieve food security for all.

27. FAO, as a member of the Joint Committee on Environment Sustainable Development in the Arab Region (JCEDAR) and the Committee on Desertification, provides technical advice and assistance in implementing a common programme. FAO attended the JCEDAR meeting held in Tunis from 12 to 14 June 2000 and its General Assembly held in Cairo in October 2000. Exchange of information, programmes and documentation on various topics related to environment and sustainable development takes place on a continuous basis between the Regional Office for the Near East and the League of Arab States

and its specialized agencies, the Arab Centre for the Studies of Arid Zones and Dry Lands (ACSAD) and AOAD, within the framework of the JCEDAR and the Committee on Desertification.

28. FAO closely cooperates with the Arab Association of Fish Producers (AAFP), an institution of the League of Arab States. The organization contributes to the annual meetings of AAFP both financially and technically. In 2000, AAFP organized a conference in Tunisia on sustainable utilization of fishery resources; FAO contributed to the budget of that conference and met transportation costs for a participant from Iraq.

K. Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees

29. The League of Arab States and the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR) are pursuing efforts to strengthen their cooperation and coordination, primarily in areas relating to refugees and more generally in relation to global humanitarian issues of common interest. Towards that end, a cooperation agreement between UNHCR and the League of Arab States was entered into in June 2000; the agreement calls for collaborative activities in the following areas: (a) organization of a regional conference/meeting to discuss selected aspects of the problems related to refugees and asylum-seekers in the region; (b) collaboration in educational, cultural and scientific organs of the League to identify and determine areas and modalities for cooperation; (c) regular technical level consultations to develop policies on the issues related to refugees and displaced persons of concern to UNHCR and the League; (d) exchange of information and expertise on policies and operations relating to the protection and assistance of refugees, asylum-seekers and other persons in need of international protection; and (e) convening a series of seminars and conferences on refugee law and basic principles of international protection in various countries of the Arab world.

L. International Civil Aviation Organization

30. The Arab Civil Aviation Commission (ACAC), which was established under the auspices of the League of Arab States, has continued to cooperate with the International Civil Aviation Organization (ICAO) in air transport matters. In the area of economic regulation of international air transport services, ICAO has continued to assist States, including members of the League, in their efforts to adjust and adapt to the changes brought about by globalization, liberalization and privatization. In addition to regular dissemination of information on the trends and developments, and relevant policy guidance, ICAO, in April 2000, took part in the 10th meeting of the Air Transport Committee of ACAC, at which an outline of a phased regional agreement to fully liberalize the exchange of traffic rights among the League's member States by the year 2005 was drafted.

M. International Fund for Agricultural Development

31. The level of indirect cooperation between the International Fund for Agricultural Development (IFAD) and the League of Arab States has been mainly through bilateral cooperation with the League's affiliate institutions, such as the Arab Fund for Economic and Social Development, the Arab Bank for Economic Development in Africa, the Arab Centre for the Studies of Arid Zones and Dry Lands or the Arab Organization for Agricultural Development.

32. In addition to designing and financing projects, IFAD provides technical assistance grants, largely but not exclusively, to support adaptive research in areas of special relevance to smallholders, the transfer of appropriate technologies and networking. Grants worth $8.8 million have been supported by IFAD, mainly through and in cooperation with the two leading League institutions: the Arab Organization for Agricultural Development, and the Arab Centre for the Studies of Arid Zones and Dry Lands.

N. International Labour Organization

33. The International Labour Organization (ILO) maintained close cooperation with the League of Arab States and particularly with its specialized agency, the Arab Labour Organization (ALO), by conducting joint activities and coordinating work pertaining to issues of common interest to both organizations. With a view to strengthening cooperation with the League of Arab

States, the two organizations signed a memorandum of understanding in March 2000, with respect to employment in the occupied Palestinian territory. It was designed to promote regular and close consultations and dialogues with the concerned parties in the Arab region, including ILO constituents, in particular the Palestinian Authority, and the pertinent regional and international organizations. The memorandum refers to collaboration in the fields of labour administration, employment policies, vocational training and guidance, occupational safety and health, labour code, social security, information and workers' education. Particular importance will be attached to efforts for: (a) securing adequate levels of funding from donors for contribution to the joint activities between ILO and the League of Arab States and its specialized agency, ALO; and (b) establishing a funds-in-trust.

34. Two coordination meetings were held during the period under review to discuss ways and means to enhance collaboration and to establish a programme of joint activities with ALO. In particular, ILO and the ALO Institute for Occupational Health and Safety, based in Damascus, maintained close working relations to carry out joint activities, including seminars and workshops and translation into Arabic of ILO publications.

35. ILO and ALO also started work on the establishment of a database on labour market information in the Arab region, utilizing the ILO Key Indicators of the Labour Market. Furthermore, ILO continued to provide technical and financial assistance for the Regional Arab Programme for Labour Administration of ALO.

O. International Telecommunication Union

36. During the period under review, the International Telecommunication Union (ITU), through its regional office for the Arab States and Arab States Unit, maintained cooperation with the League of Arab States. Besides participating with the League in a number of meetings, task forces and seminars, ITU continued to cooperate with the League in developing telecommunication in the Arab region and to exchange information.

P. United Nations Population Fund

37. The United Nations Population Fund (UNFPA) has provided the League of Arab States, and particularly the Department of Social Affairs, with substantial technical, institutional and financial assistance for basic demographic analyses, publications, as well as development of data bank and information dissemination through support to the Population Research Unit. Furthermore, in the context of its regional programme, UNFPA also supported the Pan-Arab Child and Maternal Health Survey, a multi-country survey programme undertaken in 10 Arab countries which was superseded in 2001 by a more comprehensive reproductive health survey called the Pan-Arab Project for Family Health (PAPFAM).

38. The League of Arab States, with continuous support from UNFPA and other United Nations agencies, plays a role in reinforcing regional coordination, assists in establishing a network among national population policy committees, helps to develop effective regional population policies that are in harmony with cultural and ethical values and rights, and strengthens complementarity of action among the national population councils and other concerned bodies to address issues of relevance to the Arab region. Such issues include the implications of economic and social development and reforms and globalization for the quality of life of the Arab population. The Population Research Unit, with continuous support from UNFPA and other United Nations agencies, could play an important role in assisting countries in the region to share, analyse, disseminate and use population research findings, and implement follow-up strategies to achieve the goals of the International Conference on Population and Development. In turn, the PAPFAM programme will generate the reproductive health indicators necessary for monitoring achievements towards the goals of the Conference.

Q. Universal Postal Union

39. The cooperation of the Universal Postal Union (UPU) with the Arab countries is coordinated by the Arab Permanent Postal Commission (APPC), the successor body to the Arab Postal Union. APPC consists of all the postal administrations of the member countries of the League of Arab States.

40. The UPU International Bureau is invited to and takes an active part in the annual meetings of the APPC, while League and APPC delegations have observer status and take part in the work of the permanent bodies of UPU: the Council of Administration and Postal Operations Council. The UPU International Bureau will be represented at the sixth APPC meeting in Cairo in May 2001 and plans to organize, within the framework of that meeting, a seminar for the national coordinators of the Beijing Postal Strategy in the Arab countries.

R. United Nations Relief and Works Agency for Palestine Refugees in the Near East

41. Cooperation and understanding between the United Nations Relief and Works Agency for Palestine Refugees in the Near East (UNRWA) and the League of Arab States received a further boost when the Council of Arab Foreign Ministers invited the Commissioner-General of UNRWA to address its March 2001 ministerial meeting. The Commissioner-General briefed the participants about the valuable services provided by UNRWA for Palestine refugees and stressed the urgent need for increased contributions to the Agency. The ministers expressed strong support for UNRWA and recognized the need for substantive measures to improve its financial situation.

42. In the field of education, cooperation between UNRWA and the League of Arab States is manifested in the annual meeting between the League's Council of Educational Affairs for Palestinian Children and the UNRWA Education Department.

43. The UNRWA delegation to the meeting included the chiefs of the education programme in the Agency's five fields of operations and the Chief of the Education Planning and Management Division at UNRWA headquarters in Amman. The participants discussed major achievements accomplished by the Agency's education programme in the five fields, as well as obstacles that hinder the implementation of educational services and activities.

44. Problems concerning provision of educational services usually cover issues pertaining to UNRWA staff, students, school buildings, classrooms, school curricula, educational accessories, pre-service and in-service teacher training. Views are exchanged regarding the best means to overcome obstacles through mutual cooperation.

S. World Bank

45. The cooperation between the World Bank and the League of Arab States continues to be close and productive. In addition to participating in the periodic regional meetings on cooperation between the League and the United Nations system, World Bank representatives have systematically participated in other thematic conferences sponsored by the United Nations system and the League. Specifically, the World Bank cooperates with the League in several areas, including: (a) exchange of research papers and publications; (b) continued cooperation on important developmental issues; (c) cooperation on general trade issues; and (d) cooperation from staff members of specialized agencies of the League in World Bank seminars and workshops.

T. World Food Programme

46. The World Food Programme (WFP) and the League of Arab States have initiated the process of formalizing arrangements for cooperation between the two organizations. A draft memorandum of cooperation between the two organizations is being reviewed and will be finalized in the near future.

47. The context for cooperation between the two organizations is provided by ongoing WFP operations in 14 of the League's member countries and the presence of several funding and League-affiliated technical organs with which fruitful partnerships could be built both at the policy and operational levels. WFP operations in member countries of the League assist nearly 10 million poor and food-insecure people involving over half a billion United States dollars' worth of resources. Its emergency, relief and recovery operations assist nearly 8 million people while the development projects support about 2 million people. In order to improve the effectiveness of these operations, WFP will be seeking the participation of the technical and financial organs of the League, particularly the Arab Centre for the Studies of Arid Zones and Dry Lands and the Arab Fund for Economic and Social Development.

U. World Health Organization

48. Close collaboration continues between the Regional Office of the World Health Organization (WHO) in Alexandria, Egypt, and the League of Arab States, in particular, the Council of Arab Ministers of Health. The Regional Director has participated in all the regular meetings of that council. The Director-General participated in the last council meeting. The various technical units in the Regional Office have also participated in the various technical meetings organized by the executive council where different technical topics were discussed and several technical reports were prepared. During the last year, those topics included: a tobacco control programme; child health and Arab declaration on child rights; prevention and control of genetic disorder; industrial pollution; environment education, advocacy and promotion; health legislation and bioethics; drug production and clinical pharmacy practice; Arab strategy to strengthen nursing services; control of HIV/AIDS; continued collaboration with the Arab Board for Medical Specializations; Arab Centre for Medical Publications and Literature; and an Arab strategy to combat drug addiction.

49. WHO is also actively involved in the project on family and community health. The Pan-Arab Project for Family Health is an excellent example of close collaboration between the Regional Office and the League of Arab States as well as other concerned agencies, such as the Arab Gulf Programme for United Nations Development Organizations, UNFPA and UNICEF. Close collaboration is also ongoing with ALO in the provision of technical support to develop a database on occupational diseases and work accidents in member States.

50. Cooperation also continued with the League of Arab States regarding the environmental impact of industrial activity, air quality guidelines, water conservation, combating desertification and the Arab Plan on Environment. Working relations are ongoing through the Council of Arab Ministers Responsible for Environment and two of its bodies: the Joint Committee of the Programme on Environment Education, Information and Awareness in the Arab countries and the Standing Committee on the Control of Industrial Pollution in the Arab countries.

V. World Meteorological Organization

51. The World Meteorological Organization (WMO) continued to work very closely with the National Meteorological and Hydrological Services of the League of Arab States and through its Permanent Committee for Meteorology. It continued also to collaborate with partner organizations in the implementation of Agenda 21 and the environment-related conventions, such as those on the protection of the ozone layer, climate change, desertification and biodiversity, and various plans of action, such as those related to food security, habitat and information technology.

IV. General meeting on cooperation between the secretariats of the United Nations system and the League of Arab States and its specialized organizations

52. As recommended by the General Assembly in its resolution 55/10, the general meeting on cooperation between the representatives of the secretariats of organizations of the United Nations system and of the General Secretariat of the League of Arab States and its specialized organizations took place in Vienna from 17 to 19 July 2001.

53. Representatives of the United Nations at the meeting included ESCWA, FAO, IAEA, IFAD, ITU, UNCTAD, UNDCP Office for Drug Control and Crime Prevention, UNDP, UNEP, UNESCO, UNFPA, UNICEF, UNIDO, WHO, WMO, the World Bank and the United Nations Secretariat (Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs, Department of Disarmament Affairs, Department of Political Affairs and Department of Public Information). From the League of Arab States, participants included the Arab Authority for Agricultural Investment and Development, the Arab Atomic Energy Agency, the Arab Civil Aviation Commission, the Arab Centre for the Studies of Arid Zones and Dry Lands, the Arab Industrial Development and Mining Organization, the Council of Arab Interior Ministers, the Arab League Educational, Cultural and Scientific Organization, the Arab Labour Organization, the Arab Organization for Agricultural Development, the Arab Fund for Economic Development in Africa, federations of

chambers of commerce, industry and agriculture, the Organization of Islamic Capitals and Cities and the Union of Arab Banks.

54. The meeting was co-chaired by the Director of the Asia and the Pacific Division of the Department of Political Affairs, United Nations, and the Under-Secretary-General for International Political Affairs of the League of Arab States. They represented the respective secretaries-general of the two organizations.

55. The United Nations and the League of Arab States reiterated their firm commitment to cooperating and to coordinating their efforts to promote peace and security in accordance with the objectives, principles and provisions of the Charter of the United Nations. The meeting stressed that the maintenance of peace and security is essential for the realization of sustainable human development and the welfare and prosperity of all peoples and nations, and that human security should be the foundation of international peace and security.

56. The participants acknowledged that the spread of internal conflicts requires enhanced international and regional cooperation to tackle their root causes and committed themselves to improving coordination of their efforts in the fields of preventive action and peace-building. In that connection, it was decided that further cooperation and consultation would be undertaken by the secretariats.

57. The meeting took note of the major effort launched by the League of Arab States to restructure its system with the objective of revitalizing the institution to respond to challenges and opportunities in the twenty-first century. The League confirmed that enhancing cooperation and coordination with the United Nations system was high on its list of priorities and that it hoped to benefit from and draw upon United Nations capacity-building and training expertise in the areas of conflict prevention, peace-building and disarmament. The United Nations welcomed that development and expressed its willingness to explore the possibility of cooperation in those areas.

58. The meeting agreed that cooperation in the maintenance of international peace and security should include the coordination of efforts, as the need arises, to secure the implementation of all United Nations resolutions concerning the situation in the Middle East and the question of Palestine. In that connection, they noted the active and important roles of both organizations in their collective efforts to encourage the parties to resume peace negotiations. They also noted the important visit of the Secretary-General to Amman in March 2001 to attend the Summit Meeting of the League of Arab States.

59. The United Nations and the League of Arab States welcomed the holding of the United Nations Conference on the Illicit Trade in Small Arms and Light Weapons in All Its Aspects and expressed their support for the conclusion and implementation of a realistic programme of action. The meeting called for close cooperation and partnership between the United Nations and League of Arab States systems, States and civil society, as appropriate, in combating the illicit trade in small arms and light weapons in all its aspects. To further that aim, the meeting undertook to cooperate in promoting subregional and regional initiatives and projects, including regional meetings, seminars and training programmes.

60. The meeting took note of the importance of water and water resource management in the region, and the need to address that issue in order to avoid potential conflicts over scarce water resources. The meeting emphasized the need to identify a strategy for water security in the Arab countries.

61. The meeting recommended strengthening cooperation between the League of Arab States and the United Nations on humanitarian issues, particularly building capacity for monitoring emergencies and coordinating regional relief operations; developing training and capacity-building programmes, with special reference to early warning and preparedness systems; and convening a regional workshop on humanitarian emergency assistance for victims of natural disasters and complex emergencies.

62. The working groups composed of representatives of the relevant departments, organizations and agencies considered the items on the agenda of the general meeting. Proposals and recommendations emanating from the discussions, as well as those contained in the working papers, were incorporated in the final document adopted by the general meeting at its closing session. The final document was transmitted by the United Nations Secretariat to all the participating agencies and organizations of the United Nations system and to the General Secretariat of the League of Arab States in July 2001.

Notes

[1] *Report of the United Nations Conference on Human Settlements (Habitat II), Istanbul, 3-14 June 1996* (United Nations publication, Sales No. E.97.IV.6), chap. I, resolution 1, annex II.